

Message Text

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SAM-01 AID-05 DPW-01 /079 W
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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3825

AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

USMISSION GENEVA

USDEL JEC PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 STOCKHOLM 0526

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, VS, VN, SW

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH SWEDISH FOREIGN MINISTER ON VIETNAM

REF: (A) STOCKHOLM 508 (B) STATE 020131 (C) STOCKHOLM 448

1. I BEGAN MY MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ANDERSSON BY EXPRESSING THE "SURPRISE AND CONCERN" OF THE USG AT THE SPEECH THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD GIVEN. THIS CONCERN, I SAID, STEMS FROM A NUMBER OF CONSIDERATIONS, I.E. (A) THE FACT THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD CHOSEN TO PUBLICLY CRITICIZE THE US POLICY IN VIETNAM BEFORE A MEETING ARRANGED BY THE SWEDISH COMMITTEE FOR VIETNAM, WHICH HAS BEEN NOTORIOUSLY CRITICAL OF THE US FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS; (B) THE TIMING WAS PARTICULARLY INAPPROPRIATE SINCE IT OCCURRED AT A MOMENT WHEN THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAVE LAUNCHED AN INTENSIFIED MILITARY
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CAMPAIGN AGAINST SOUTH VIETNAM, CAPTURE OF A

PROVINCIAL CAPITAL, AND INFILTRATED MORE THAN 170,000 NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS AND (C) THE FACTS AS STATED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER IN THE SPEECH WERE NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TRUE SITUATION PREVAILING IN VIETNAM, THAT I HAD REPEATEDLY PRESENTED TO HIM.

2. I TOOK EXCEPTION TO SOME OF THE MORE FLAGRANT INACCURACIES AND DISTORTIONS IN THE SPEECH. I NOTED THAT SENTENCE THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THE VIETNAM CONFLICT "RESTS HEAVILY ON THE SAIGON REGIME AND THOSE WHO SUUPPORT ITS POLICIES" AND THAT THE US GOVERNMENT "HAS NOT ACCEPTED THE FULL CONSEQUENCES OF THE SIGNED AGREEMENT" AND HAS NOT "UNDERSTOOD THE LESSON OF THE LAST 20 YEARS." I OBSERVED THAT, IF THE PARIS AGREEMENTS HAVE NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED, IT HAS NOT BEEN DUE TO THE US OR SAIGON GOVERNMENTS BUT RATHER TO THE REFUSAL OF THE HANOI REGIME TO ABIDE BY THEM. TO SAY WE HAVE NOT LEARNED "THE LESSON" IS COMPLETELY INCORRECT. ON THE CONTRARY, WE KNOW MORE ABOUT THE SITUATION AND ITS COMPLEXITIES THAN ANY OTHER NATION IN THE WORLD. WITH A STRONG SENSE OF JUSTICE AND COMPASSION, THE US HAS TRIED TO PROMOTE A FAIR AND REASONABLE SETTLEMENT IN THE AREA.

3. AS TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S STATEMENTS THAT THE USG HAS TAKEN OVER A "COLONIAL" WAR AND THAT THIS HAS CONSTITUTED A "DISGRACE OF DEMOCRACY," I SAID SHARPLY THAT I REJECTED THIS NOTION, AND THAT, IF THERE IS ANY DISGRACE TO DEMOCRACY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, IT IS THE COMMUNIST DICTATORSHIP OF NORTH VIETNAM THAT ENGAGES IN AGGRESSIVE MILITARY ACTIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND ELSEWHERE IN INDOCHINA.

4. I NOTED THAT THERE WAS ONE SENTENCE IN THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S SPEECH WITH WHICH THE USG AGREED FULLY, AND THAT WAS HIS STATEMENT (FIRST MADE BY PRIME MINISTER PALME IN 1965) THAT "IT IS AN ILLUSION TO THINK THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO MEET DEMANDS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE BY VIOLENCE AND MILITARY POWER." I SAID THIS ACCORDS WITH OUR OWN STATEMENT (AS PUBLISHED IN OUR BACKGROUND PAPER ON VIETNAM, WHICH I LEFT WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER) THAT "THE IMPOSITION OF POLITICAL SOLUTIONS BY MILITARY FORCE

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NOT ONLY VIOLATES OUR PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE BUT DOES NOT LEAD TO REAL PEACE." I SAID IT WAS A TRAGEDY FOR VIETNAM THAT THE HANOI GOVERNMENT HAS NOT ACCEPTED THIS THESIS AS WELL.

5. WHAT WE FOUND PARTICULARLY PUZZLING, I CONTINUED, WAS THAT THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT IS MAKING A MAJOR EFFORT TO HELP PREVENT A VIOLENT COMMUNIST TAKE-OVER IN PORTUGAL,

YET SUPPORTS HANOI IN ITS ATTEMPT TO BRING THE COMMUNISTS
TO POWER IN SOUTH VIETNAM BY FORCE.

6. AFTER MAKING MY PRESENTATION, I SAID I WOULD APPRECIATE
ANY CLARIFICATION THE FOREIGN MINISTER COULD PROVIDE OF
HIS SPEECH.

7. IN A LONG, RAMBLING REPLY, LASTING MORE THAN 30
MINUTES, ANDERSSON ATTEMPTED TO DEFEND HIS JAN 27 SPEECH.
HE SAID HE REGRETTED THAT HIS REMARKS HAS CAUSED SURPRISE
AND CONCERN IN THE US GOVERNMENT. THE SWEDISH VIETNAM
COMMITTEE, HE ASSERTED, WAS A RESPECTABLE ONE AND ACTUALLY
"COMPETED" WITH THE MORE RADICAL FNL MOVEMENT. AS TO THE
TIMING OF HIS SPEECH, IT WAS MEANT TO COINCIDE WITH THE
SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE PARIS AGREEMENTS.
THE ASSERTION THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WAR RESTS
WITH THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT AND ITS SUPPORTERS WAS SIMILAR
TO A STATEMENT MADE BY 4 OF THE 5 SWEDISH POLITICAL PARTIES
IN DECEMBER DURING VIETNAM WEEK (STOCKHOLM 5607).

8. ANDERSSON SAID IT WAS REGRETTABLE THAT NO "EFFECTIVE
INITIATIVES" (PRESUMABLY BY THE US) HAD BEEN TAKEN TO STOP
THE CONTINUING VIETNAM CONFLICT IN THE TWO YEARS SINCE THE
AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED. WHEN HE SAW SECRETARY KISSINGER
LAST FALL AT THE UNGA, ANDERSSON CONTINUED, HE ASKED THE
SECRETARY IF THE USG COULD UNDERTAKE AN INITIATIVE TO

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GET THE PARIS AGREEMENTS IMPLEMENTED AND THUS AVOID A POSSIBLE ESCALATION OF THE WAR. THE SECRETARY, ANDERSSON SAID, REPLIED THAT IT WAS UP TO THE PARTIES CONCERNED, AND HINTED THAT AN INITIATIVE FROM SAIGON COULD BE EXPECTED TO BREAK THE DEADLOCK.

9. WHAT THE GOS NOW FEARS, ANDERSSON CONTINUED, IS THAT CHINA, THE USSR, AND THE US WILL NOT MAKE A SERIOUS EFFORT TO STOP THE FIGHTING IN VIETNAM WITH A RESULTANT ESCALATION OF THE CONFLICT. PRESIDENT FORD'S PROPOSAL TO ASK FOR AN ADDITIONAL \$300 MILLION DOLLARS IN AID FOR SOUTH VIETNAM POINTS TO A CONTINUED MILITARY CONFLICT, NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PARIS AGREEMENTS.

10. CONCERNING GOS POLICY TOWARDS THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT, CONFIDENTIAL

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ANDERSSON SAID IT WAS THE GOS THESIS THAT THE "TWO PARTIES ARE EQUAL" AND THEREFORE GOS COULD NOT RECOGNIZE SAIGON AS THE ONLY LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE OF SOUTH VIETNAM AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES. FOR THIS REASON, GOS HAD "CUT OFF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS" WITH SAIGON, IN AN EFFORT TO DEMONSTRATE I PUTS BOTH SIDES ON EQUAL FOOTING. AT THE SAME TIME, GOS HAS "FIRMLY REJECTED" DEMANDS FOR DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION OF THE PRG BY LOCAL LEFTIST GROUPS.

11. ANDERSSON THEN LAUNCHED INTO AN HISTORICAL EXPLANATION OF WHAT HE HAD MEANT BY REFERENCE TO THE US "TAKING OVER" A COLONIAL WAR OF THE FRENCH. DEMOCRACY IN WESTERN EUROPE AND US, HE ASSERTED, HAD NOT BEEN SERVED BY US PARTICIPATION IN THE VIETNAM WAR. ON THE CONTRARY, THE IMAGE OF US DERIVED FROM WWII AS PROTECTOR OF WESTERN DEMOCRACY WAS DIMINISHED BY THE VIETNAM WAR, PARTICULARLY IN THE EYES OF THE YOUNG GENERATION. ANDERSSON SAID IT WAS A "HISTORICAL FACT" THAT WESTERN EUROPEAN RADICAL MOVEMENTS WERE "BORN" FROM THE VIETNAM WAR. THOSE WHO HAVE SOUGHT INSPIRATION FROM US DEMOCRACY "DEEPLY REGRET" US INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM CONFLICT, ANDERSSON SAID.

12. ANDERSSON EMPHASIZED THAT HE WAS SPEAKING "MORE IN SORROW THAN IN ANGER." HE SAID A COMMUNIST TAKE-OVER IN SOUTH VIETNAM WOULD NOT RPT NOT AT ALL APPEAL TO HIM. BUT THE ONLY CHANCE TO AVOID THIS HAPPENING, HE CONTINUED, IF IT IS NOT TOO LATE ALREADY, WOULD BE TO IMPLEMENT THE POLITICAL CLAUSES IN THE PARIS AGREEMENT REGARDING FREE ELECTIONS AND INTERNATIONAL CONTROLS. ANDERSSON SAID HE PERSONALLY IS ANTI-COMMUNIST, AND THAT THE GREATEST THREAT TO COMMUNISM IS FREE ELECTIONS, WHILE ITS "BEST FRIENDS" ARE WAR AND CHAOS. FOR THAT REASON, HE CONCLUDED, A POLITICAL SOLUTION IN VIETNAM MUST BE FOUND "AT ANY PRICE."

13. I THANKED THE FOREIGN MINISTER FOR HIS COMMENTS AND SAID I WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS MYSELF FIRST TO HIS FINAL REMARKS. I SAID I CONSIDERED IT A DANGEROUS DOCTRINE TO SAY DEMOCRACY CANNOT BE DEFENDED NOR FOUGHT FOR, LEST YOU DESTROY IT IN THE PROCESS. IF AMERICANS HAD REGARDED DEMOCRACY AS SUCH A FRAGILE PLANT, THEY WOULD NEVER HAVE FOUGHT THEIR OWN REVOLUTION, AND I QUOTED TO HIM JEFFERSON'S CONFIDENTIAL

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SAYING THAT IT WAS SOMETIMES NECESSARY TO WATER THE TREE OF LIBERTY WITH THE BLOOD OF TYRANTS. WHILE DEMOCRACY SHOULD NOT FIGHT FOR UNJUST CAUSES, IT MUST DEFEND ITS FREEDOM AND THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION. IT WAS TRUE THAT THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY OF THE VIETNAM WAR THERE HAD BEEN DOMESTIC US OPPOSITION TO THE US COMMITMENT ON THE SIDE OF SOUTH VIETNAM, BUT THAT A MAJORITY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND CONGRESS HAD SUPPORTED OUR EFFORTS THROUGH SUCCESSIVE PRESIDENCIES. AS TO THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM, I WOULD NOT ASSERT THAT THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT WAS A DEMOCRACY AS FLAWLESS AS ONE THAT HAS LONG THRIVED ON PEACE, BUT I DID KNOW THAT THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE DO NOT WANT TO LIVE UNDER COMMUNISM IMPOSED BY THE NORTH.

14. CONTINUING, I SAID I HAD BEEN STRUCK BY THE PERSISTENCE OF THE GOS IN ASCRIBING ALL VIRTUE TO THE HANOI REGIME AND ALL EVIL TO SAIGON. IT SEEMED TO ME NATURAL THAT THE COMMUNISTS OPPOSE FREE ELECTIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM (AS THEY DO IN PORTUGAL), SINCE THEY KNOW THEY WILL LOSE. FOR THIS REASON THEY HAVE SABOTAGED THE PARIS AGREEMENTS. ON THE QUESTION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS ACCORDS, THE USG DISAGREES COMPLETELY WITH THE GOS VIEW, SINCE IT IS HANOI WHICH VIOLATES THEM AND PREVENTS FREE ELECTIONS. I POINTED OUT THAT IN CONTRAST TO THE SOVIETS AND CHINESE, WE HAD NOT SUPPORTED THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE MILITARILY ON A ONE-TO-ONE BASIS WHICH WE WERE PERMITTED TO DO UNDER

THE PARIS AGREEMENTS. THIS REFLECTED OUR DETERMINATION NOT TO
ESCALATE THE FIGHTING.

15. I EXPLAINED WHY THE SECRETARY HAD STRESSED THE NEED
TO LEAVE THE INITIATIVES IN VIETNAM UP TO THE TWO PARTIES
IN FACT, THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT HAD MADE A SIGNIFICANT
INITIATIVE BY PROPOSING THE UNCONDITIONAL RESUMPTION
OF TALKS, WHICH UNFORTUNATELY HANOI HAD REJECTED.
THE NORTH VIETNAMESE SOUGHT TO CHANGE THE
STATUS QUO IN VIETNAM IN THEIR FAVOR BY MILITARY MEANS
AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE PARIS AGREEMENTS, AND CONTINUED
TO DO SO BY THEIR RECENT OFFENSIVE. THIS, I EMPHASIZED,
DOES NOT SHOW A WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE ON HANOI'S PART
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BUT RATHER AN ATTEMPT TO STRIKE AT THE JUGULAR VEIN OF

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SOUTH VIETNAM. CONCLUDING, I SAID I SIMPLY COULD NOT UNDERSTAND HOW IN THE LIGHT OF THIS EVIDENCE, ANYONE COULD SO ONE-SIDEDLY SUPPORT THE HANOI GOVERNMENT AND SEE NO MERIT IN THE SAIGON POSITON.

16. ANDERSSON RESPONDED BY QUOTATIONS FROM PRESIDENT THIEU WHICH HE SAID SHOWED SAIGON'S UNWILLINGNESS TO LIVE UP TO THE PARIS ACCORS. I REPLIED THAT I WAS NOT IN HIS OFFICE TO PUT TO HIM THE CASE OF SOUTH VIETNAM--UNFORTUNATELY NO SOUTH VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR WAS PRESENT IN SWEDEN TO DO THAT--BUT TO PRESENT THE CASE OF THE USG. NEVERTHELESS, IT WAS CLEAR TO ME THAT IT WAS NOT THE THIEU GOVERNMENT WHICH WAS REJECTING THE PARIS AGREEMENT. I SAID OUR MAIN PREOCCUPATION HAS BEEN TO ASSURE THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM THE RIGHT TO HAVE THEIR OWN
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GOVERNMENT, TO CREATE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH DEMOCRACY COULD FLOURISH. IF THE GOS DOES NOT WANT TO SEE SOUTH VIETNAM BECOME COMMUNIST, IT SHOULD SUPPORT OUR EFFORTS TO SECURE THE PEOPLE OF THAT COUNTRY THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION, SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE CRUSHED BY COMMUNIST MILITARY POWER.

17. THE FOREIGN MINISTER THEN RETURNED TO THE POINT THAT IT WAS THE "OUTSIDE POWERS"--THE US, USSR, AND CHINA--WHICH WERE SUPPLYING THE WEAPONS OF WAR TO THE WARRING SIDES. THE ONLY SOLUTION, HE SAID, WOULD BE TO GET A TACIT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE THREE TO SCALE DOWN THEIR LEVEL OF SUPPLIES. OTHERWISE, THE SITUATION WOULD INEVITABLY RESEMBLE THE MIDEAST, WITH A CONTINUAL ESCALATION OF ARMS. NORTH VIETNAM, HE NOTED, NOW HAS MODERN ANTI-AIRCRAFT WEAPONS, "NEXT TIME" THEY MAY OBTAIN JET FIGHTERS.

18. I AGREED THAT SUCH AN AGREEMENT MIGHT BE A LAUDABLE OBJECTIVE, BUT I SAID THAT TO TRY TO ACHIEVE ANY MEANINGFUL AGREEMENT IT IS NECESSARY TO USE "QUIET DIPLOMACY" (AS THE SECRETARY HAS TERMED IT), AND PERHAPS THE GOS COULD BE HELPFUL IN THIS RESPECT BY PERSUADING THE COMMUNIST SIDE TO DE-ESCALATE. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT THE USG WAS SO DISAPPOINTED THAT INSTEAD OF UTILIZING DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS, THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD CHOSEN TO USE A PUBLIC FORUM TO MAKE A ONE-SIDED SPEECH. WE WOULD HAVE HOPED THE GOS WOULD SUPPORT THE SAIGON

PROPOSAL FOR UNCONDITIONAL NEGOTIATIONS. UNQUALIFIED PUBLIC SPEECHES IN SUPPORT OF HANOI DO NOT RPT NOT ASSIST THE CAUSE OF PEACE BU ENCOURAGE NORTH VIETNAM IN ITS AGRESSION.

19. ANDERSSON REPLIED THAT THE LOCAL FNL GROUPS HAD COMPLAINED THAT IN HIS SPEECH HE HAD NOT CRITIZED THE USG HARSHLY ENOUGH. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE PALME GOVERNMENT HAS AN "INTERNAL POLITICAL PROBLEM" RESULTING FROM LEFTIST PRESSURE. THE GOS, HE SAID, NEEDS THE SUPPORT OF PUBLIC OPINION TO "ISOLATE" THE FNL EXTREMISTS.

10. I THANKED THE FOREIGN MINISTER FOR HIS CLARIFICATIONS, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND SAID I WOULD CONVEY THEM TO MY GOVERNMENT. ANDERSSON REPLIED THAT HE "REGRETTE" THAT WE HELD DIFFERENT OPINIONS ON VIETNAM, BUT WISHED TO STRESS THAT THE GOS CONSIDERED IT AN "ISOLATED QUESTION," INASMUCH AS ON MOST OTHER MATTERS THE TWO GOVERNMENTS HAVE THE SAME VIEWS AND HAVE GOOD COOPERATION.

21. I REPLIED THAT WHILE IT WAS MY ARDENT HOPE THAT THIS EPISODE HAD NOT AFFECTED OUR GOOD RELATIONS, I WISHED TO REMIND THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE SENSITIVITY OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT ON THE QUESTION OF VIETNAM. THE USG HAD MADE A TREMENDOUS EFFORT TO ACHIEVE PEACE IN VIETNAM, WE HAVE WITH GREAT PRESEVERANCE AND PATIENCE TIRED TO OBTAIN A JUST SETTLEMENT AND THEREFORE IT IS NATURAL THAT WE REGARD ONE-SIDED CRITICISM AS A KIND OF SNIPING BY IRRESPONSIBLE CRITICS. IN CONCLUSION, I QUOTED TO HIM THE SLOGAN PRINTED ON THE WALL OF A SALOON IN THE OLD WEST: "DON'T SHOOT THE PIANO PLAYER--HE'S DOING THE BEST HE CAN." I SAID I HOPED THAT THE LEADERS OF ALL THE SWEDISH POLITICAL PARTIES WOULD APPRECIATE THAT WE ARE DOING THE BEST WE CAN.

22. COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR THAT THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN IMPRESSED BY THE SHARPNESS OF OUR REACTION TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S VIETNAM SPEECH. IT IS ALSO APPARENT THAT THE SPEECH WAS HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY DOMESTIC CONSIDERATIONS, WITH THE EXPECTATION THAT US REACTIOS WOULD REMAIN WITHIN ACCEPTABLE (FOR THE GOS) BOUNDS. I BELIEVE OUR STRONG RESPONSE HAS REAFFIRMED TO THE GOS LEADERSHIP THE NECESSITY OF TAKING USG REACTION MORE CAREFULLY INTO ACCOUNT BEFORE INDULGING IN THE KIND OF BIASED RHETORIC WHICH THE FOREIGN MINISTER USED IN HIS SPEECH. FROM MY DISCUSSION WITH ANDERSSON AND A CONVERSATION WITH MFA SECRETARY GENERAL SVERKER ASTROM, I BELIEVE THE MFA IS DISTURBED BY WHAT THE IMPLICATIONS OF OUR

REACTION MIGHT MEAN FOR US-SWEDISH BILATERAL RELATIONS.
HENCE ANDERSSON'S EMPHASIS ON THE ARGUMENT THAT, ON MOST
ISSUES OTHER THAN VIETNAM, WE HOLD COMMON VIEWS.
STRAUSZ-HUPE

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